

U.S. Department of Education
2009 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Type of School: (Check all that apply) ☐ Elementary ☒ Middle ☐ High ☐ K-12 ☐ Other
☐ Charter ☐ Title I ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice

Name of Principal: Ms. Carol Stephens-Klipp

Official School Name: Bedford Middle School

School Mailing Address:
88 North Avenue
Westport, CT 06880-2721

County: Fairfield State School Code Number*: 51

Telephone: (203) 341-1510 Fax: (203) 341-1508

Web site/URL: http://blackboard.westport.k12.ct.us E-mail: cklipp@westport.k12.ct.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Elliott Landon

District Name: Westport Tel: (203) 341-1025

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Don O'Day

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Original signed cover sheet only should be mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as USPS Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2008-2009 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.
6. The nominated school has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, or 2008.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:
- | | |
|----------|---------------------|
| 5 | Elementary schools |
| 2 | Middle schools |
| | Junior high schools |
| 1 | High schools |
| | Other |
| 8 | TOTAL |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 15407

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 12151

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- ☐ Urban or large central city
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
☒ Suburban
☐ Small city or town in a rural area
☐ Rural

4. 1 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

8 If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK			0	7	156	140	296
K			0	8	135	135	270
1			0	9			0
2			0	10			0
3			0	11			0
4			0	12			0
5			0	Other			0
6	137	143	280				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							846

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
5 % Asian
1 % Black or African American
2 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
92 % White
0 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 0 %

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	0
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	3
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	3
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	838
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.004
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	0.358

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 1 %

Total number limited English proficient 7

Number of languages represented: 5

Specify languages:

Spanish, Swedish, Chinese, Korean, French

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3 %

Total number students who qualify: 22

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 12 %

Total Number of Students Served: 103

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>4</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>13</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>63</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>16</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>2</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>73</u>	<u>4</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>8</u>	<u>4</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>15</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>16</u>	<u>1</u>
Total number	<u>116</u>	<u>15</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 13 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Daily student attendance	99%	97%	96%	94%	98%
Daily teacher attendance	92%	91%	92%	91%	92%
Teacher turnover rate	26%	17%	19%	21%	23%
Student dropout rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

The teacher turnover rate is effected by retirements, the cost of living in this region, non-renewals, spousal relocation, as well as the demanding environment and high expectations for educators in this community.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2008 are doing as of the Fall 2008.

Graduating class size	<u>0</u>	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>0</u>	%
Enrolled in a community college	<u>0</u>	%
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0</u>	%
Found employment	<u>0</u>	%
Military service	<u>0</u>	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	<u>0</u>	%
Unknown	<u>0</u>	%
Total	<u>100</u>	%

PART III - SUMMARY

Bedford Middle School students benefit from the academic excellence of the Westport Public School (WPS) system. Our 6th, 7th and 8th graders come from three elementary where they acquire knowledge/skills from rigorous instructional programs. Our students are eager to explore ideas; they enjoy developing their abilities in an academic setting. Their parents share these interests which dovetail with the BMS mission, "To help students experience the joy of learning through the satisfaction of discovery."

Towards this end, teachers meet daily in grade level teams and weekly in departments. They share observations, knowledge, strategies, materials, lessons, experience, and assessments. They plan backwards so that students have opportunities to construct knowledge. They collect data, and they focus on results. These grade level teams each include a special education teacher. Our building, too, is designed to support delivery of developmentally appropriate instruction to young adolescents. It opened in 2001. Five classrooms (Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies and Resource) are grouped in 'pods,' around a large central area. This environment adds to the effectiveness of our team structure, promoting close-knit bonds between and among teachers and students. Additionally, each team is served by a counselor and a psychologist, providing the personalization and support students may need. This enhances our ability to address the intellectual, physical and social-emotional needs of our population.

Westport is situated on Long Island Sound, 47 miles north of New York City. Known for its visual and performing arts, the community's schools reflect this. We provide instruction in the four core subjects as well as in physical education, world language, health, technology, choral and instrumental music, drama/presentation skills and art. The focus on the arts is evident as students perform and exhibit, demonstrate and present the processes and habits of mind they develop in their classes. Significant numbers of students participate in intramurals, musical ensembles, art, theatre, and writing outside of curricular requirements.

Bedford does its utmost to ensure that every student has the opportunity to learn and thrive. Teachers offer extra-help before, during and after school. Our teacher of the gifted instructs identified students, and also serves as a resource for colleagues as they differentiate instruction. One of our three Vice Principals is dedicated to overseeing all aspects of Special Education. Our Student Support Team (SST) meets weekly to review progress of our most at-risk students in regular education. The SST may assign support in Literacy, Math or Academic Skills based upon the students' needs. The after-school program, Club Bed, offers supervision and guidance as students complete homework and strengthen their study skills. Westport participates in Open Choice as one means of reducing racial isolation. Students from a nearby urban community may join this K-12 program.

Among our BMS traditions is Blue/Gold. Each incoming 6th grader is placed on one of the two teams; every staff member is also designated Blue or Gold. School-wide competitions, and spirit activities, led by student Blue/Gold Captains, occur several times throughout the year. These foster community, citizenship, leadership and fun. This year the Student Council merged with this group forming the Blue-Gold Council, another construct to strengthen student leadership and voice.

Bedford A.M. (BAM), is another important part of the culture. It is a student-run, in-school television production that is broadcast four mornings a week. This informs students about upcoming/current events. On the fifth morning, homeroom is extended for an advisory-like period called Connections. Groups of 12-15 students meet with a faculty member who serves as an advocate and touchstone throughout the year.

Finally, Bedford students are introduced to B3MS (Be here. Be safe. Be honest. Move on. Set goals.), our Full Value Contract, through our Physical Education Program. It is intended to establish guidelines so that group members get the full value from a shared experience. Both students and staff make reference to B3MS when we have conversations around expectations. We apply this to how we 'do school' at Bedford.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

Our state's standardized test is known as the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT). Students achievement is reported at the following levels: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Goal, and Advanced. Students are tested in Reading, Writing, Math, and beginning in 2008 (for grades 6 and 8 only), Science. For Connecticut students, "Meeting the Standard" is performing at the Goal Level. The CMT test has evolved from Generation 1 to its current form, Generation 4. Within the reporting period required in this application, both Generation 3 and 4 results are reported. The State used Generation 3 until 2006, when testing expanded to include all students in grades 3-8. Additionally it was moved from a fall administration (October), to a spring date (March). Prior to this, only grades 4,6, and 8 were tested. Thus Grade 7 only shows three years of data. Due to changes in the tests, the State Department of Education has suggested that direct comparisons between Generation 3 and 4 may not be valid. Additional State Assessment Data are available at www.ctreports.com.

On this test, most of our students, including our students receiving special education services, consistently perform at or above goal. Referencing the three years using the Generation 4 version, the following trends may be noted: In Mathematics Grade 6, the level of students scoring at goal or above has been 92% in 2005-6, 92% in 2006-7 and 96% in 2007-8. In Grade 7 those figures are 88%, 90%, and 93%. In Grade 8, they are 91%, 94% and 92%. Over the same time period, the numbers of students achieving at the advanced level has been fairly consistent for grade 6: 63%, 69% and 66%. In grade 7, the program has shown improved results in this area with 54% in 2005-6 scoring at the advanced level, 60% in the following year, and 73% in 2007-8. The same strengthening of our program is demonstrated by the increasing numbers of 8th graders who earn an advanced score: 55%, 59% and 61% during the same time. Our students eligible for special education have benefited from our rigorous math program as well. Grade 6 achievement level of goal and above over these three test administrations has increased from 53% to 71%. In grade 7, this has grown from 50% to 56% of our students meeting or exceeding the standard. Grade 8 has shown less consistency in these scores with 50% at goal or above in 2005-6, 68% in 2006-7, and 56% in 2007-8.

Our reading achievement on Generation 4 CMTs has been most consistent in grades 6 and 7 where students have achieved goal and above as follows: Grade 6 in 2005-6, 93%, in the following year, 88% and in 2007-8, 93%. In each of the three years, 92% of Grade 7 students have performed at goal or above. In Grade 8, the percentages have pointed to a need to carefully review the results. In 2005-6, we had 94% at this level. In 2006-7, there were 91% and in 2007-8, 80% of our students scored at or above goal. The percentage of students scoring at the advanced level in reading has ranged from 40-59%, without a steady increase at any of the grade levels over this three year period. With the exception of grade 8 in 2006-7 (44%), over half of our students in special education have achieved or exceeded goal in reading on this version of the test. In grade 6, 58% of this subgroup met or exceeded goal in 2005-6. The following year, 51% did so, and last year there were 79% of our students who received scores at this level. In grade 7, the percentages of students at or above goal have been 57%, 60% and 57%. The results for 8th graders were 61% in 2005-6, the 44% in 2006-7, and 53% in 2007-8. Our Language Arts program has increasingly improved the alignment of curriculum among teachers, using common assessments to do so as well as to measure students' growth formatively, and differentiating within our heterogeneous groups to ensure that every student is working to his/her potential.

Cohort trends show that our current 8th graders increased their performance in both math and reading from grades 6 to 7. As 6th graders on the math test, 92% were at goal or above, with 69% of those scoring at advanced. As 7th graders, 94% made or exceeded goal, with 73% of those achieving an advanced score. In reading, while 6th graders, 88% of those same youngsters were at or above goal. 42% of them were advanced in their achievement. As 7th graders, 92% met or exceeded goal with 59% at the advanced level.

In Connecticut, schools are classified by District Reference Groups (DRGs) which are based on seven data indicators considering socioeconomic status, family need and enrollment. CMT scores are reported by DRG. Westport is one of 8 districts in DRG A. Using the 5 years of test data required in this application, Westport has been the highest scoring district in our DRG 9 of 13 times in math for grades 6,7 and 8. We have scored within the top half of the DRG in Reading over this time period 7 of 13 times.

Report card grades provide important data for assessment of academic progress as well as students' overall performance. For the first quarter of 2008-9, we had one 6th grader (out of 280), one 7th grade (out of 296) and four 8th graders (out of 270) who had one or more failing grades. These youngsters are known well by their teachers, counselors, support staff and administrators. All receive support tailored to their individual needs which range from gaps in their curricular knowledge to social-emotional or behavioral issues. At BMS, we focus on each child. Our work includes understanding their current level of performance, their learning styles, their areas of interest and gaps in their skills and/or knowledge. Our curriculum and instruction are designed to increase their skills and knowledge. We are strengthening our data literacy in order to do this work. We also must understand the challenges and barriers students face which are not academic in nature. Our pupil personnel department is integral to our support of these students.

2. Using Assessment Results:

The results from the Connecticut Mastery Tests (CMTs) provide teachers, Curriculum Coordinators and administrators with information about the strengths and weaknesses of our program. We look for patterns, trends and outliers as we analyze this data. Additionally, students' achievement scores are carefully reviewed as the school year begins. Results in math are viewed by strand for incoming students as well as for those tested in the year prior. Achievement over time indicates our curricular and instructional areas that require improvement. Summer curriculum work and weekly department meetings are designed to target these. Departments collaborate to bolster the curriculum and to provide additional instruction. Based upon this approach, in 2007-2008, a dip in sixth graders meeting goal was noted in concepts of measurement and conversion of units. Teachers of math and science collaborated and began planning a scope and sequence that would address these in both departments. They observed one another's instruction. They aligned their practices for introducing these topics and developed a common and consistent language for instruction. Students' scores on midterms and finals have indicated that they have retained their understanding and skills of measurement and conversion. More sixth graders tested in 2008-2009 scored at the goal level. Similarly, department goals in Social Studies and Language Arts are based upon analysis of our students' achievement on the Reading Strands, and on the Writing and DRP components of the CMTs.

Students who score below goal on the CMTs are retested in writing, reading and math early in the fall. This provides us an additional data point to consider when developing their instructional program. Those who do not make goal on the retest are enrolled in Literacy and/or Math Support, which is taught by two teachers dedicated to those roles. The Student Support Team (SST) is comprised of these teachers, a third whose focus is Academic Support (organization and study skills), the principal, school nurse, and grade level teams. SST meets weekly with teams (each team meets in SST once a month) in order to provide more intensive instruction for students who demonstrate need for intervention. CMT sub-scores, classroom assessment results, tier I and II intervention efforts, mid-quarter and report card grades are reviewed in these meetings as we develop a comprehensive understanding of students' strengths and needs. These serve as diagnostic guides for differentiated instruction. This is a Response to Intervention (RTI) Model.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

The Westport Community has a strong interest the academic performance of our students. The standardized test scores are published in local newspapers, parents receive individual score reports from the State, and our district website provides comprehensive information about CMT, CAPT (Connecticut Academic Performance Test taken by 10th graders), and SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) results.

In 2007-8, our online system for communication went live and we have rolled out electronic mid-quarters and report cards through the Blackboard Educational Software. Parents receive formal information about their children's progress 8 times a year. With the use of Blackboard, the information is available to them much more quickly. They may view grades and review assignments online as well. This is a two-way communication tool as well with email, announcements and discussion board features that promote dialogue between and among teachers, students and parents. In our pilot year, we are eager to tap into these tools.

Our communication with parents takes many forms. We have Open Pod (Team) Meetings for parents three times a year. Teachers provide an overview of current classroom assignments and projects. Counselors and psychologists review developmental progress of youngsters and describe their programs. Parents, teams, counselors, administrators and psychologists conference to share insights, concerns and to learn more about students' growth and progress. Testing data is analyzed, explained and used in these conversations to ensure we have a shared understanding of the student. Ongoing conversations, on the phone, in person and sometimes via email, are common. As our students mature, they are included in these meetings and are a part of the dialogue in order to develop their self-advocacy skills, to promote their increasing responsibility for their growth, and to increase their understanding of themselves as learners.

4. Sharing Success:

Professional learning has led to improved student learning at Bedford and in the district. Our leadership team across all of the Westport Public Schools communicates and collaborates, sharing individual expertise among the 8 schools .

Just as important, we engage in dialogue with schools of other districts in order to enhance the collective achievement of middle schoolers. For example, our Library Media Center (LMC) has been undergoing reform in an effort to facilitate student and teacher use of communication technology. Our faculty has visited neighboring district's schools to see how they use the LMC to meet the needs of their students. Recently, we have been asked to share our Student Support Team Model with a middle school in New York. We have been asked about our block scheduling in grade 6 and subsequently have coordinated with neighboring districts in order to share this knowledge. The dialogue, whether about successes, new initiatives, or common concerns, deepens, broadens and hones our educational acumen. We welcome the opportunity to increase the conversations as a Blue Ribbon School, if we are selected. Bedford would promote middle school philosophy and best practices in curriculum and instruction by hosting visits from others who are interested in exchanging ideas. We would welcome opportunities to participate in exhibits, seminars, conferences, etc., to share successes, and to continuously reflect on our ongoing growth.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Bedford's teachers provide instruction based upon the Westport Public Schools' (WPS) Curriculum. They collaborate closely in order to provide assured experiences to all students. Technology is integrated into instruction; most core classrooms are equipped with mounted SmartBoards. Our library media specialist attends department meetings in order to coordinate resources not only in terms of content, but also to differentiate them to meet the needs of students at various levels. Every student's growth and progress is monitored to ensure that they are engaged and learning.

The content is relevant; the expectations are rigorous. WPS has Curriculum Coordinators who coach teachers instructionally and who coordinate with them for a high degree of collegial conversation and professional learning. They work at both middle schools in the following areas: LA grades 6-8; Math 6-8; World Language 6-8. In Science, the Curriculum Coordinator works with K-8 teachers, and in Social Studies, there are Department Liaisons at each middle school who serve as teacher-leaders in this area.

Our math curriculum is a focused and coherent balance of conceptual understanding and procedural knowledge. It has been written by WPS K-12 teachers who, by planning backwards from Calculus, have eliminated unnecessary redundancy and overlap. Fewer concepts are taught, thereby providing more depth. In grade 6 students may take Grade Level or High Math. In grade 7, Grade Level Math, Pre-Algebra and Algebra 1 Honors are offered. In Grade 8, students performing at grade level take Pre-Algebra. Those who are accelerated take Algebra 1, Algebra 1 Honors or Geometry Honors.

Our Language Arts Curriculum is multi-faceted. All aspects of communication are included in our program: reading, writing, usage and mechanics, grammar, speaking and listening. Students self-select books for literature circles as well as whole-class book study. Writing instruction targets description, telling a story, organization, and development of personal and persuasive essays. Students reflect and interact with print through personal response. They discuss literature with one another as well as with their teacher. The transfer and application of reading and writing skills to all subject areas is emphasized.

The Social Studies Curriculum builds upon 4 overarching ideas: effective citizenship, global understanding, multiple perspectives and historical thinking. The content for all three grades is U.S. History, beginning with Exploration to the Civil War in grade 6. This is followed in grade 7 with Reconstruction to World War II, and in grade 8 with The Cold War to the Present. Unit objectives not only target understanding of our nation's history, but also skill development in technology, writing and critical thinking.

Our Science Curriculum is inquiry-based. In grade 6, a foundation in biological science and an understanding of the interactions between Earth's systems is taught with an emphasis on the human impact on those systems. They collect and organize data, drawing conclusions based upon that information. Students pose questions and design ways to test them. Earth Science and an introduction to physical science through studies of matter and motion comprise our 7th grade year. Increased use of sophisticated laboratory equipment and a deeper study of scientific principles are demonstrated in performance-based assessments. In grade 8, middle school science culminates with the examination of physical science. This continues with an introduction to chemical and biological sciences.. Through laboratory experiences and content-focused activities, students deepen their problem-solving skills. Data collection and graphing skills are reinforced as students explore the properties of light, energy, matter and body systems. They analyze data and develop their own laboratory procedures to solve science investigations.

Beginning in Kindergarten and through grade 5, WPS students experience instruction in Spanish. In grade 6, youngsters may choose to continue with Spanish, or they may begin to study French. Every BMS student takes

World Language through grade 8. By grade 8 World Language classes are conducted in the target language, with minimal English being spoken or written. Culturally rich, thematic units relevant to our students have been designed by WPS teachers. These provide students many opportunities to interact with each other as they speak and write. Students who have taken Spanish through grade 8 study many of the concepts and grammar structures which previously were studied in second year high school courses.

Students take Drama/Presentation Skills in all three grades. This is a three-year program designed to deliver to students the basic understanding of how an actor prepares for a role in a play. Each year builds on the foundational knowledge established in grade 6. Instruction in improvisation, script analysis, objectives and tactics combines to prepare students to perform dramatic and comic monologues and scenes.

The Art Program at BMS offers a full range of artistic experience. Every student has almost an hour and a half each week throughout the year devoted to art. This consistent block of time allows for deep exploration of projects and materials. Over the three year period students will work in both two and three dimensions, and they will be afforded numerous drawing opportunities using tempera, acrylic, color pencil and marker. They make prints, use clay, wood, fabric and wire to create three dimensional work. The Art Curriculum is always evolving as teachers find improved methods to address the State and National Fine Arts Standards.

Bedford has a comprehensive Music Curriculum that is based upon the National Standards. General Music is required of all students in 6th grade. This is supplemented by Music Technology offerings in the 7th and 8th grades. There are full, grade-level elective courses for strings and band instrumental music as well as for choral music. Almost 650 students participate in these classes. In addition to the grade-level ensembles that meet two times per week, instrumental music teachers are able to assess and provide instruction in smaller-group, like-instrument classes to all students in the Instrumental Music Program.

Our Physical Education Program teaches students to value physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and social interaction. We have designed our curriculum to help students achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness. They demonstrate competency in motor skills, movement patterns, and their understanding of these as they participate in physical activities. Our program builds in opportunities for students to exhibit responsible and respectful personal and social behavior.

2b. (Secondary Schools) English:

At Bedford Middle School, our goal is to have students become life-long readers and writers who use language effectively for communication, learning, and enjoyment. Recognizing the varied learning styles of students, we provide learning experiences that demonstrate our understanding of these differences. The Language Arts program consists of instruction in all aspects of 21st century skills in a rigorous, standards-based curriculum.

In grade 6, students read short stories, poetry, nonfiction, and historical fiction. During the short stories and poetry units, students experience an in-depth genre study that addresses components of the texts as well as higher order thinking skills. In the nonfiction unit, students examine types of text, analyze how each works, and synthesize their learning by creating their own nonfiction article about a "Positive Person" in their lives, after intensive study and use of questions, interviewing, leads, and paragraph development. These skills are applicable to all content areas. During the Social Studies Unit on the Revolutionary War, all sixth graders read Fever 1793 in Language Arts. While they study the Civil War, students, with teacher guidance, choose a book appropriate for their reading level to read and discuss in literature circles. Writing, grammar, and vocabulary are embedded in each unit. Sixth grade writers can describe and explain something well and tell a story successfully. They practice the organization and development of paragraphs and longer pieces. These students learn techniques for improving a piece of writing, reworking the text to clarify meaning, to bring life and color to their writing, and to correct writing errors.

In Grade 7, students read historical fiction, poetry, and memoir. Again, as students learn about Immigration and later World War II in Social Studies, they select titles to read and discuss in literature circles. As in Grade 6, student choice is guided by their teachers, and every attempt is made to present significant new titles as well as classic texts for rich, fresh, and meaningful student selection and connection. Whole class texts include Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry and The Pearl as well as poetry and memoir, and students continue in-depth genre studies as well as focusing on essential questions. Writing, grammar, and vocabulary are embedded in each unit. Seventh grade writers describe something well, tell a story successfully, and organize and develop both personal and persuasive essays. They refine techniques of revision, reworking the text to sharpen focus, to improve clarity and coherence, to strengthen supporting details or examples, and to correct errors.

In Grade 8, students read short stories, Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing, Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird, and Wiesel's Night. Students also choose books for literature circle reading to complement their Social Studies units on Civil Rights and Human Rights. Student choice is guided and enriched constantly by teacher interaction. Grade 8 students closely examine short story and memoir, analyze how each type of text works, and synthesize their learning by creating a short story at the start of the year and a memoir at the end. Eighth grade writers are also engaged in composing a literature-based, analytical essay with a convincing argument and a clear and cogent style. They continue to refine techniques of revision started in Grade 7.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

In the sciences, our emphasis is on hands-on, inquiry-based labs and activities. Most of the teachers have been trained by the Connecticut Science Center in the Introduction to Inquiry Program first developed at the Exploratorium in California. The research basis from the Exploratorium supports our teaching approach. Our curriculum was last revised in 2003, prior to the state of Connecticut's release of a 2004 draft framework. We subsequently confirmed that our local curriculum aligns with the state curriculum and appropriately emphasizes process skills in addition to specific content (as outlined in question # 1: Curriculum). Our daily schedule allows for periodic double periods, so that labs can be carried out completely.

We have the good fortune of having authentic lab rooms for all grades at Bedford, with rooms physically laid out with lab stations and stools. Permanently mounted SmartBoards are utilized daily in each science classroom; instructional material is clearly displayed for students, integration of streaming video broadens their experience with the content, and teachers' ability to download notes to absent students or students in need of accommodations is facilitated by this technology. Our Science Program aligns with our mission. Students work cooperatively to acquire core knowledge through discovery.

Eighth grade teachers make recommendations for their students to enter leveled biology courses in the high school. Eighth grade students present a research project in the "Science Showcase" in December, and they are evaluated on a poster display board and an oral presentation to a staff member. They have choice over their research topic and may work with a partner. This culminating activity allows students to fully utilize the inquiry process, skills and knowledge acquired during three years at BMS.

4. Instructional Methods:

The staff members of Bedford Middle School get to know students as individual learners, employing a wide range of innovative as well as tried-and-true educational techniques to reach and teach the children in our care. Well-schooled in the art and science of differentiation, Bedford teachers most often begin with a pre-test to discover the current state of each child's background knowledge and skill level. Based on the data collected, teachers devise lessons that address the specific student needs for each unique class. In the classroom, students can be seen working in whole-class, small group, partner and solo configurations. Active learning through hands-on lessons, open-ended questions and simulations such as mock trial, debate, geometric constructions, Shakespearean adaptations, science fair, and acting out roles in an ecosystem capture student attention and register content deeply in memory. Supportive strategies such as direct instruction, cooperative learning, peer

conferencing and use of graphic organizers provide additional avenues for deepening comprehension. Technology is woven throughout the curriculum as students use online resources to research and problem-solve; then prepare films, slide shows, audio stories, spreadsheets, written reports and animations to communicate their learning and insights effectively. Blackboard is being used for online discussion boards and dialogue between and among teachers and students. SmartBoards in nearly every classroom enhance class discussions, while software systems such as Hey Math! provide precise, individualized learning opportunities. The unique needs of gifted students are respected and accommodated along with the needs of students with average abilities and those who require educational support. Each Bedford teacher knows the true heart of education is the connection between teacher and student. What makes our school stand out is the genuine and lasting caring that develops through this educational partnership. Years later, students still come to visit their former teachers and share enthusiasm for their ongoing learning journeys.

5. Professional Development:

In the WPS, support of the highest quality staff is a cornerstone of the district's success. Our Professional Development and Evaluation Plan states our philosophy in this way: "The high level of professional practice of teachers and administrators" will "close any gaps that exist between the town's expectations for student learning and actual student performance."

Support of our newest teachers is critical with ongoing mentorship from veteran BMS faculty. Periodic meetings throughout the year ensure they receive tutelage in our grade reporting system, in our evaluation and supervision program, and in our culture of collective inquiry and reflective practice. This is reinforced by the Curriculum Coordinators who meet weekly with their departments; professional development activities are embedded into our everyday work.

BMS leadership encourages learning; it encourages innovation. This year we have five days dedicated to professional development. We look at a variety of data. We look at results from assessments. We ask questions and describe our concerns. This collaboration develops professional knowledge. Instructional and content experts are brought in to share their approaches. We have had authors here to speak about young adult literature and writing workshop. Teachers travel to seminars in order to learn from others. Summer curriculum work allows teachers and Curriculum Coordinators time to delve deeply into content. Our application of technology for managerial, scheduling and communication tasks is increasing. There is a steady increase in students and teachers using technology (SmartBoards, Podcasting, Discussion Boards, etc...) for learning. For the past two summers, BMS faculty have participated with other WPS colleagues in three-day Technology Institutes where new opportunities for teaching and learning are explored. Pioneers who are at the forefront of using educational technology are invited to present their findings. We are a district unafraid of challenge, and this promotes our growth.

6. School Leadership:

Leadership at BMS is distributed among formal and informal leaders: teachers who are Team Leaders and Department Representatives, administrators who are Curriculum Coordinators, Vice Principals who oversee a grade level, as well as the Principal who supports and envisions the ongoing progress of Bedford as a learning community. This is a large school, with 846 students and over 100 staff members.

The commitment to communication is one that is highly valued at BMS. That translates into allocation of time. The Teacher Leadership Council meets on a monthly basis in order to discuss relevant issues and to problem solve collectively. The master schedule is designed to accommodate our collaboration. Teams meet weekly, as do our departments. As a grade level, teachers, counselors, psychologists and administrators convene weekly as well. The Pupil Personnel Staff meets with the same frequency. The three Vice Principals and the Principal meet formally once a week, and informally daily. All of these educators act as learning leaders everyday. They

provide support, guidance and expertise beyond our building as they collaborate with colleagues across the district.

Communication with parents is a critical component for every school leader at Bedford. We hold Transition Meetings for parents in order to provide them with an overview of the upcoming program and personnel at the next grade level. Curriculum and schedules are reviewed as are the developmental traits of students through the coming year. The Transition Meetings are coordinated vertically with elementary schools for incoming 6th graders and with the high school for our outgoing 8th graders. They are held at BMS for parents of youngsters moving from grades 6 to 7 and grades 7 to 8.

Our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is an important contributor to the leadership of BMS. They sponsor activities that promote a warm and caring climate for students and faculty. Among these are the 6th grade Scavenger Hunt to introduce students to the building, the Monster Mash, our Halloween Dance, as well as breakfasts and luncheons for the staff. Our PTA enhances the academic curriculum. The Cultural Arts Committee arranges for assemblies that include the work of artists and musicians. The PTA provides funds for supplemental programs through the Bedford Bear Grant Program. The PTA and BMS faculty partner to foster school spirit, to maintain a supportive learning environment, and to provide a rich curriculum so that all of our students thrive.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6 Test: Connecticut Mastery Test

Edition/Publication Year: Generation 4

Publisher: Measurement Inc

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Oct	Oct
SCHOOL SCORES					
Goal plus Advanced	96	92	92	95	94
Advanced	66	69	63	55	51
Number of students tested	297	264	262	278	244
Percent of total students tested	97	100	98	97	93
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	3	16
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. (specify subgroup): Special Education					
Goal plus Advanced	71	56	53		
Advanced	18	17	13		
Number of students tested	34	41	30		
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading

Grade: 6 Test: Connecticut Mastery Test

Edition/Publication Year: Generation 4

Publisher: Measurement Inc

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Oct	Oct
SCHOOL SCORES					
Goal plus Advanced	93	88	93	94	94
Advanced	47	42	50	36	29
Number of students tested	297	264	263	278	241
Percent of total students tested	97	99	99	97	92
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	3	19
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. (specify subgroup): Special Education					
Goal plus Advanced	79	51	58		
Advanced	0	5	7		
Number of students tested	34	41	31		
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 7 Test: Connecticut Mastery Test

Edition/Publication Year: Generation 4

Publisher: Measurement Inc

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Oct	Oct
SCHOOL SCORES					
Goal plus Advanced	94	90	88	1	1
Advanced	73	60	54	1	1
Number of students tested	266	260	289	1	1
Percent of total students tested	98	97	97	1	1
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	2	3	1	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	1	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. (specify subgroup): Special Education					
Goal plus Advanced	56	54	50		
Advanced	26	9	21		
Number of students tested	39	35	28		
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

The CMT was not administered to grade 7 in 2003-4 or 2004-5.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 7 Test: Connecticut Mastery Test

Edition/Publication Year: Generation 4

Publisher: Measurement Inc

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Oct	Oct
SCHOOL SCORES					
Goal plus Advanced	92	92	92	1	1
Advanced	59	46	47	1	1
Number of students tested	266	259	289	1	1
Percent of total students tested	98	97	97	1	1
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	2	3		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. (specify subgroup): Special Education					
Goal plus Advanced	57	60	57		
Advanced	10	3	4		
Number of students tested	39	35	28		
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

The CMT was not administered to grade 7 in 2003-4 or 2004-5.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 8 Test: Connecticut Mastery Test

Edition/Publication Year: Generation 4

Publisher: Measurement Inc

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Oct	Oct
SCHOOL SCORES					
Goal plus Advanced	92	94	91	92	95
Advanced	61	59	55	57	56
Number of students tested	264	295	246	254	229
Percent of total students tested	97	99	96	96	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	0	3	0	5
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. (specify subgroup): Special Education					
Goal plus Advanced	56	68	50		
Advanced	9	13	7		
Number of students tested	34	31	28		
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading

Grade: 8 Test: Connecticut Mastery Test

Edition/Publication Year: Generation 4

Publisher: Measurement Inc

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Oct	Oct
SCHOOL SCORES					
Goal plus Advanced	90	91	94	92	93
Advanced	41	43	55	58	54
Number of students tested	264	296	246	255	227
Percent of total students tested	97	100	96	97	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	0	3	0	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. (specify subgroup): Special Education					
Goal plus Advanced	53	44	61		
Advanced	0	6	14		
Number of students tested	34	32	28		
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes: